

## MILWAUKIE LIGHT-HOUSE.

APRIL 2, 1860.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. ELIOT, from the Committee on Commerce, made the following

### REPORT.

*The Committee on Commerce, to whom was referred the memorial of "shippers, navigators, and others," asking for an appropriation for a light-house at Milwaukie, in the State of Wisconsin, now report:*

That early in the session of the present Congress the attention of the committee was called to the necessity of a light-house at Milwaukie, by the Hon. John F. Potter, representative from that district, who also addressed a letter to the chairman of the committee on the subject, which is made a part of this report:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES U. S.,  
February 28, 1860.

MY DEAR SIR: In reply to the verbal inquiries made by yourself of me, on yesterday, in relation to the necessity for a new light-house at or near the north cut of the harbor at Milwaukie, Wisconsin, I beg leave to say that there can be no doubt but that the necessity for an appropriation for that purpose is very great. The present light at that locality stands on the end of a pier which is only some six or seven feet above the level of the lake, is a beacon light only, and is entirely insufficient. It is, moreover, insecure, and liable at any time to be destroyed by the action of the severe storms to which it is exposed.

The pier upon which it is situated projects some five or six hundred feet into the lake, and there is no room whatever for a dwelling-house for the keeper, who is, therefore, obliged to live on the shore, from which the light cannot be seen.

In stormy weather the waves frequently break over the end of the pier several feet deep, thus rendering it impossible for the keeper to reach the light, or even to know if it is burning; and this, too, at the very time it is most necessary, thereby enhancing greatly the risk of life and property.

The estimate of the Light-house Board for the construction of a sufficient light at this point is but about forty thousand dollars.

When the importance of Milwaukie as a large commercial point, the rapidly increasing commerce of the lake, and the manifest impor-

tance of safe harbors of refuge on the lake coast, are considered, I do not doubt but that the committee will at once see the urgent necessity of immediate action.

I would, therefore, most respectfully, yet earnestly, request that the committee will make provision in the light-house bill for the immediate erection of a permanent and sufficient light-house at or near the point indicated.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JNO. F. POTTER.

Hon. E. B. WASHBURNE,

*Chairman of the Committee on Commerce,*

*House of Representatives U. S.*

A copy of a letter from Captain R. Semmes to the Secretary of the Treasury is annexed to this report.

Personal interviews have been had by your committee with the officers of the Light-house Board, and with the other representatives from Wisconsin, and there is no doubt in their minds that a light-house as prayed for is much needed; and they recommend that the sum of fifty thousand dollars may be appropriated therefor.

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TREASURY DEPARTMENT,

*Office of Light-house Board, March 10, 1860.*

SIR: I have had the honor to receive the letter of the Hon. C. H. Larrabee, of the House of Representatives, of the 8th instant, (together with a memorial of shippers, navigators, &c., of Milwaukie, Wisconsin,) addressed to you, asking for the erection of a new light-house at that place, and by you referred to this board for a report. Milwaukie is, as you are aware, a large and rapidly increasing commercial point; and its harbor is of great importance, not only to the regular commerce of the lakes, but as a place of refuge in stress of weather.

The present light is so low that it was found necessary to change its color to red, to prevent its being confounded with ships and other lights. This necessarily impaired its efficiency. Still, it would probably answer all necessary purposes if it were at all times accessible to the keeper, which is not the case. The light stands on the end of a pier projecting some two hundred feet into the lake. The pier is only six feet above the surface of the water, and in heavy gales the sea breaks over it waist deep, rendering it impossible for the keeper to pass to or from his light. There is not sufficient room on the end of the pier to admit of a dwelling for the keeper being placed there; and if there were, it would be too unsafe to require him to live in it.

From what has been said, it will be seen that it is precisely at those times when the light is most wanted, viz: in stormy weather, when vessels are running for shelter, that it is least to be depended upon. The only remedy which suggests itself is to construct a detached pier or block sufficiently large to receive a new light-house, with keeper's dwelling attached, which would probably cost about fifty thousand dollars, which the board respectfully recommends.

I would, beside, respectfully call your attention to the mode of construction here proposed as a suitable one to be adopted in all cases hereafter where new light-houses are required to be built upon piers.

It is highly objectionable to place light-houses upon the end of piers, public or private, constructed for harbor purposes, as the fact of placing them in such localities seems to commit the government more or less to the repair and renovation of the piers as light-house sites, which has the effect to complicate the Light-house establishment, more or less, by connecting it with river and harbor improvements.

The independent pier to be used as a site only, should, in my opinion, be adopted in all cases where practicable, to avoid the inconveniences I have mentioned.

I return the memorial, and Mr. Larrabee's letter.

Very respectfully,

R. SEMMES,  
*Secretary.*

Hon. HOWELL COBB,  
*Secretary of the Treasury.*

